

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 301410

FOLLOWING REPEAT RANGOON 3902 ACTION SECSTTATE DEC 15.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 3902

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT: FY-79 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL CONGRESSIONAL
PRESENTATION

REF: STATE 271848

1. FOLLOWING IS OUR SUBMISSION, IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, OF MATERIAL
FOR THE FY-79 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL CONGRESSIONAL
PRESENTATION.

2. INFORMATION PROFILES/OBJECTIVES

A. THE PROBLEM. BURMA IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCERS OF
ILLICIT OPIUM. GIVEN BURMA'S POOR MARKETING AND TRANSPORTATION
NETWORKS, THE OPIUM POPPY HAS BEEN THE CASH CROP OF CHOICE FOR
MANY BURMESE FARMERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE BELONGING TO ETHNIC
MINORITY GROUPS RESIDING IN NORTHERN BURMA. UNTIL RECENTLY,
NARCOTICS CARAVANS WERE ABLE TO MOVE FREELY BETWEEN OPIUM
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PRODUCING AREAS IN THE INTERIOR AND PROCESSING/MARKETING CENTERS
ALONG THE BORDER WITH THAILAND. INCREASED GUB MILITARY AND
CIVILIAN ACTION HAS HINDERED, BUT HAS BY NO MEANS ELIMINATED,
THE MOVEMENT OF NARCOTICS WITHIN BURMA. HEROIN PROCESSING
CENTERS HAVE SPRUNG UP ALONG THE BURMA/THAI BORDER, A LOCATION
GIVING THE TRAFFICKERS A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF IMMUNITY FROM
BURMESE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES.

B. U.S. INTEREST: THE U.S. DOES NOT HAVE A JOINING PROGRAM IN
OPERATION. THE GUB JEALOUSLY GUARDS ITS NEUTRALIST POSITION

AND BELIEVES IT CAN ONLY GO SO FAR IN ACCEPTING AID OR ADOPTING COMMON OBJECTIVES WITH THE U.S. FORTUNATELY, THE GUB, FOR ITS OWN REASONS, INSTITUTED A NATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REDUCE, AND EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE, DRUG TRAFFICKING WITHIN BURMA, U.S. AND BURMESE INTERESTS DO MESH IN THIS AREA AND THE BURMESE HAVE MODIFIED THEIR NEUTRALIST POSITION TO THE EXTENT THAT U.S. AID FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION HAS BECOME POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE, ALBEIT NOT A SUBJECT FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION WITHIN BURMA. THE U.S. HOPES THAT WITH MATERIAL AND OTHER ASSISTANCE PROVIDED, THE BURMESE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE INROADS ON TRAFFICKING TO THE POINT WHERE BURMA DOES NOT REPRESENT A SOURCE, OR POTENTIAL SOURCE, OF NARCOTICS FOR ADDICTS WORLDWIDE.

C. STRATEGY. NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION WORK IN BURMA IS LARGELY A MILITARY ENDEAVOR WITH BURMA ARMY UNITS ATTACKING WELL-ARMED, EXPERIENCED INSURGENT/TRAFFICKING FORCES. THE U.S. PROGRAM HAS BEEN GEARED TO PROVIDING MATERIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE BURMA ARMY'S PROGRAM. WE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPLIED THE BURMESE WITH 18 BELL 205-A HELICOPTERS TO GIVE THEM MOBILITY IN ATTACKING CARAVANS AND FORTIFIED TRAFFICKER EMPLACEMENTS, ALONG WITH COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR TACTICAL USE. IN THE COMING YEAR THE BURMESE WILL TAKE DELIVERY OF FOUR FH-227 FIXED WING TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. IN THE LONG-TERM WE EXPECT TO SEE THE BURMESE
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EXERT STRONG AND CONTINUING PRESSURE ON THE TRAFFICKERS SO THAT PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRADE WILL FIND IT DESIRABLE TO SHIFT TO OTHER PURSUITS. TO DO THIS, THE BURMESE MUST CONTINUE TO ATTACK PROCESSING CENTERS ALONG THE BURMA/THAI BORDER, NARCOTICS CARAVANS OPERATING BETWEEN NORTHERN BURMA AND THE BORDER, AND INDIVIDUAL MERCHANTS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN CONTROL OF THE MARKETING NETWORK THROUGHOUT BURMA. WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS WE EXPECT TO SEE THE BURMA ARMY LAUNCH AN OPERATION AGAINST ONE OR MORE NARCOTICS PROCESSING CENTERS. INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THIS TARGET IS BEING PROVIDED TO THE BURMESE BY THE USG. THE MISSION MONITORS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GUB PROGRAM AND THE SPECIFIC USE OF U.S. SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT. REQUESTS FOR NEW EQUIPMENT FROM THE GUB WILL BE JUDGED IN LIGHT OF THE RECORD ALREADY ESTABLISHED FOR USE OF U.S. ASSISTANCE.

D. PROGRESS TO DATE. BURMESE FORCES HAVE STRUCK AT THE MAJOR LINKS IN THE TRAFFICKING CHAIN. LAST YEAR POPPY ERADICATION, FOR THE FIRST TIME, WAS EXTENDED INTO AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT INSURGENT PRESENCE. THESE ERADICATION TEAMS, EITHER DRAWN FROM LOCAL BURMA ARMY COMMANDS OR, IF CIVILIAN, ESCORTED BY BURMESE TROOPS, DESTROYED APPROXIMATELY 9,000 ACRES OF OPIUM POPPY, THE EQUIVALENT OF 40 TONS OF RAW OPIUM. BURMA ARMY UNITS WERE USED EXTENSIVELY TO BLOCK NARCOTICS CARAVAN ROUTES. CARAVAN ACTIVITY HAS DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM PAST YEARS. THE SHAN UNITED ARMY (SUA), WHICH WAS PREDOMINANT AS A CARAVAN RUNNING ORGANIZATION ONLY A YEAR AGO, HAS EXPERIENCED GREAT DIFFICULTY SO FAR IN 1977. IN 1976 REPORTED OPIUM DELIVERIES TO THE BURMA/THAI BORDER AMOUNTED TO

APPROXIMATELY 130 TONS, WELL BELOW THE FIGURE FOR 1975 WHICH WAS ESTIMATED TO BE IN EXCESS OF 200 TONS. IN 1977 REPORTED OPIUM DELIVERIES FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THOSE OF LAST YEAR. THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1977 WITNESSED A SHARP RISE IN REPORTED DELIVERIES, TWEVER, TOTAL RECORDED DELIVERIES OF RAW OPIUM NOW STAND AT BETWEEN 80 AND 90 TONS. WHILE RAWOPIUM SHIPMENTS REMAIN WELL BELOW THE AVERAGE OF THE LAST FEW YEARS, DELIVERIES OF IMPURE MORPHINE BASE ROSE SIGNIFICANTLY. REPORTED SHIPMENTS
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DELIVERED TO BORDER AREA SITES TOTAL NEARLY 7 TONS FOR THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1977; THE TOTAL FOR 1976 (12 MONTHS) WAS 4.1 TONS. (ONE TON OF IMPURE MORPHINE BASE IS EQUIVALENT TO ROUGHLY 6 TONS OF RAW OPIUM.) THE BURMA ARMY HAS ALSO BEEN TASKED WITH ATTACKING INSURGENT/TRAFFICKING POSITIONS ALONG THE BURMA/THAI BORDER. TWO LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED IN 1977. SEVEN HUNDRED TROOPS ATTACKED SUA POSITIONS IN JANUARY NEAR THE MAE KHAM SALIENT AND IN JUNE, 1,000 TROOPS ATTACKED A CLUSTER OF REFINERIES AND STORAGE SITES AT THE BORDER ADJACENT TO MAE HONG SON PROVINCE, THAILAND. THE TRAFFICKING GROUPS, NOTABLY THE SUA, SUFFERED FINANCIALLY FROM SEIZURES OF NARCOTICS AND CHEMICALS AND THE DISRUPTION OF PROFITABLE SMUGGLING ROUTES. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT SEIZURES CONDUCTED IN POLICE OPEATIONS, THE MOST NOTABLE BEING THE AUGUST SEIZURE OF OVER 600 KILOGRAMS OF NARCOTICS, INCLUDING 217 KILOGRAMS OF HEROIN, AT THE BORDER TOWN OF TACHILEK. ACCORDING TO DEA, THIS WAS THE SECOND LARGEST SEIZURE OF HEROIN EVER RECORDED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

DESPITE ITS IMPRESSIVE RECORD TO DATE, THE GUB'S NARCOTICS SUPPRESION PROGRAM HAS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE BURMA IS ELIMINATED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING NETWORK. ALTHOUGH OPIUM PRODUCTION IS DOWN, MOST OF THE REMAINING OPIUM POPPY IS CULTIVATED IN AREAS NOT UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL. UNLESS THE INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS REVERSE THEIR CURRENT POLICY OF FOSTERING OPIUM PRODUCTION, IT WILL PROVE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE GUB TO FORCE FURTHER DRAMATIC CUTBACKS IN PRODUCTION. CONCERTED BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS HAVE TURNED THE 400-600 MULE OPIUM CARAVAN INTO A THING OF THE PAST. THE TRAFFICKERS HAVE ADOPTED NEW TACTICS, INCLUDING THE USE OF HUMAN PORTERS CARRYING IMPURE MORPHINE BASE AS OPPOSED TO PACK ANIMALS BEARING THE MUCH BULKIER SHIPMENTS OF RAW OPIUM. DUE TO COST CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITED NUMBERS, THE BURMESE HAVE NOT USED THE BELL 205-A'S IN SPOTTING OR SHADOWING THE
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CARAVANS. THEY HAVE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF USING LIGHT SCOUT HELICOPTERS FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE U.S. HAS BEEN ASKED TO SUPPLY THE HELICOPTERS. REPEATED ATTACKS ON TRAFFICKING POSITIONS ALONG THE BORDER, ALTHOUGH SUCCESSFUL IN INFLICTING FINANCIAL

LOSSES ON THE TRAFFICKERS, HAVE NOT LED TO A PERMANENT OUSTER OF THE TRAFFICKERS FROM THEIR SANCTUARIES ALONG THE BORDER. INVARIABLY, AS THE BURMA ARMY WITHDRAWS FROM THE BORDER, BE IT LO CHAI OR THE MAE HONG SON AREA, THE TRAFFICKERS COME RIGHT BACK IN. PRIOR TO OPERATION MOHEIN III IN JUNE 1977 THERE WAS HOPE THAT THE BURMESE AND THAI MIGHT BE MOVING TOWARDS LIMITED COOPERATION LEADING EVENTUALLY TO JOINT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE TRAFFICKERS. CONCERTED, COORDINATED EFFORT BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS WOULD PROBABLY PROVE EFFECTIVE IN DRIVING THE TRAFFICKERS FROM THE BORDER. HOWEVER, THE INCURSION OF THAI HELICOPTERS INTO BURMA DURING THE OPERATION AROUSED LONGSTANDING BURMESE SUSPICIONS OF THAI COMPLICITY WITH INSURGENT GROUPS. SEIZURE OF ONE OF THE HELICOPTERS AND THE RESULTANT RECRIMINATIONS THREW OUT THE WINDOW ANY IMMEDIATE HOPE OF COORDINATED OPERATIONS AGAINST THE TRAFFICKERS. PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE DIM AT THIS TIME. EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF COORDINATED OPERATIONS, HOWEVER, CONTINUED INDEPENDENT EFFORTS BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS WILL PROVE EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL IN DENYING AT LEAST PART OF THE BORDER TO THE TRAFFICKERS.

3. NARCOTICS PRODUCTION. IN RECENT YEARS, OPIUM PRODUCTION IN BURMA HAS BEEN ESTIMATED AT APPROXIMATELY 400 TONS PER ANNUM. LAST YEAR, HOWEVER, OPIUM PRODUCTION REPORTEDLY FELL TO ABOUT 200 TONS, BECAUSE OF BOTH UNFAVORABLE WEATHER AND GUB POPPY ERADICATION EFFORTS, WHICH HAVE GREATLY REDUCED POPPY CULTIVATION IN AREAS UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL, PARTICULARLY IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SHAN STATE. THE MAJORITY OF OPIUM PRODUCED IN BURMA COMES FROM INSURGENT CONTROLLED OR OTHERWISE INACCESSIBLE AREAS IN THE NORTHERN SHAN AND KACHIN STATES. THIS YEAR, SEVERAL FACTORS ARE WORKING TO KEEP TOTAL PRODUCTION LOW: THE PRICE OF RAW OPIUM IS AT A RECORD LOW IN MANY PRODUCING AREAS -- OPIUM IS LOSING ITS VIABILITY AS A CASH CROP; PERSISTENT RICE SHORTAGES IN UPPER BURMA
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HAVE PERSUADED SOME FARMERS TO SWITCH FROM POPPY TO PADDY PRODUCTION; WIDESPREAD FIGHTING AND DISLOCATIONS HAVE TENDED TO LIMIT POPPY CULTIVATION IN SEVERAL HITHERTO VERY PRODUCTIVE AREAS; AND MANY FARMERS ARE FEARFUL OF GUB PUNITIVE ACTION. THIS LAST FACTOR HAS LED TO CHANGES IN THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF POPPY CULTIVATION, AT LEAST IN AREAS ACCESSIBLE TO GUB CIVILIAN OR MILITARY AUTHORITIES. FARMERS HAVE PLANTED POPPY IN MORE REMOTE FIELDS, AND HAVE DISPERSED POPPY AMONG OTHER CROPS, COMPOUNDING THE PROBLEM OF DETECTION. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN OPIUM PRODUCTION, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN THE UNPRECEDENTED DROP IN PRICE IN PRODUCING AREAS. OPIUM PRODUCTION DID NOT PROVE PROFITABLE TO MANY UPPER BURMA FARMERS LAST SEASON; A CONTINUATION OF THIS CONDITION CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE INROADS ON THE NUMBER OF FARMERS ENGAGED IN ILLEGAL OPIUM PRODUCTION.

F. PROCESSING. METHODS OF PROCESSING, IN A CHEMICAL/LABORATORY SENSE, HAVE REMAINED LARGELY UNCHANGED. MOST OPIUM NOT CONSUMED LOCALLY OR EXPORTED IN A RAW OR COOKED FORM IS PROCESSED INTO

HEROIN AT REFINERIES LOCATED ALONG THE BURMA-THAI BORDER.

STATISTICS INDICATE THAT IN 1977 MORE RAW OPIUM THAN USUAL MAY HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO IMPURE MORPHINE BASE, AN INTERMEDIATE STEP IN THE REFINING PROCESS. MUCH OF THIS CONVERSION HAS BEEN DONE AT CRUDE REFINERIES IN NORTHERN BURMA. TRAFFICKERS HAVE FOUND IT FAR EASIER AND LESS RISKY TO TRANSPORT THE LESS BULKY IMPURE MORPHINE BASE.

G. MARKETING/TRAFFICKING. MOST NARCOTICS LEAVE BURMA ACROSS THE BORDER INTO THAILAND. KEY TRANSIT POINTS STRETCH FROM MAE SAI ALONG THE BORDER TO THE MAE HONG SON AREA. THE PRINCIPAL LOCI IN THE EXPORT OF NARCOTICS SHIFT IN RESPONSE TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS -- WHEN PRESSURE IS EXERTED IN ONE PARTICULAR AREA, TRAFFICKERS SHIFT THEIR ACTIVITIES TO ROUTES
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CROSSING ELSEWHERE ALONG THE BORDER. THE MAJOR INSURGENT/TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE EXPORT OF NARCOTICS FROM BURMA CONCENTRATE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THESE ROUTES INTO THAILAND. OTHER POINTS OF EGRESS DO EXIST, HOWEVER, AND ARE KNOWN OR BELIEVED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: BY LAND THROUGH THE TENASSERIM DIVISION INTO SOUTHERN THAILAND; BY BOAT FROM TENASSERIM PORTS TO THAILAND AND MALAYSAI; BY SHIP FROM THE PORTS OF RANGOON AND BASSEIN; AND BY LAND INTO INDIA. THE MAJOR TRAFFICKING GROUPS DO NOT YET APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY INVOLVED IN THESE ALTERNATE ROUTES NOR IS THE VOLUME OF NARCOTICS EXPORTED VIA THESE ROUTES BELIEVED TO BE SIGNIFICANT IN A RELATIVE SENSE. INTERNALLY, HEROIN IS TRANSPORTED FROM THE BORDER REFINERIES BACK INTO BURMA FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION. MAJOR TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE HEROIN ROUTES TO THE INTERIOR. THROUGH SECONDARY TRAFFICKERS, HEROIN IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. SOLDIERS ARE A PARTICULAR FAVORITE OF INDEPENDENT DRUG MERCHANTS FOR USE AS COURIERS.

H. LOCAL DRUG ABUSE. OPIUM CONSUMPTION, ONCE CULTURALLY, SOCIALLY AND LEGALLY ACCEPTABLE, REMAINS WIDESPREAD IN SOME AREAS EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOW ILLEGAL. ALTHOUGH STEPS WERE TAKEN OVER 20 YEARS AGO TO RESTRICT OPIUM USE, SERIOUS CONCERN AND RECOGNITION THAT A NATIONAL DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM DID EXIST IN BURMA CAME ONLY IN THE EARLY 1970'S. IT WAS WIDESPREAD AND GROWING USE OF HEROIN AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CITIES THAT FINALLY ALERTED BURMA'S LEADERSHIP TO THE NEED FOR DRUG REHABILITATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS. IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY THE MAGNITUDE OF LOCAL DRUG ABUSE. GUB STATISTICS ARE EITHER NOT COLLAPSED OR ARE SO VAGUE AND INCOMPLETE AS TO BE MISLEADING. THE LAST EMBASSY SURVEY, BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH CONCERNED OFFICIALS AND THOSE OTHERWISE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE LOCAL DRUG SCENE, LED TO AN ESTIMATE OF 130,000 ADDICTS IN BURMA -- 90,000 OPIUM ADDICTS AND 40,000 HEROIN ADDICTS. THE DOSAGE RATE FOR OPIUM ADDICTS WAS ESTIMATED AT 2.5 KILOGRAMS PER

YEAR, AND FOR HEROIN ADDICTS OF 146 TO 365 GRAMS PER YEAR, PER
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ADDICT, DEPENDING ON THE PATTERN OF ABUSE. MOST HEROIN ADDICTS IN URBAN AREAS USE NUMBER FOUR HEROIN. ACCORDING TO GUB STATISTICS, 23,295 ADDICTS HAVE REGISTERED FOR TREATMENT, MANDATORY UNDER LAW. OF THESE, 15,884 WERE OPIUM ADDICTS, 1,780 HEROIN ADDICTS, AND 5,631 WERE ADDICTED TO OTHER DRUGS. MINISTRY OF HEALTH OFFICIALS PLACED RECIDIVISM AT 80 PERCENT.

I. ATTITUDES. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DRUG ABUSE IS INCREASING UNDER GOVERNMENT AND PARTY SPONSORSHIP. THE CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING EXHIBITIONS, FILMS, DISCUSSION SESSIONS, AND SEMINARS IS DIRECTLY PRIMARILY AT REDUCTING THE SPREAD OF DRUG USAGE AMONG THE YOUNG. ATTENDANCE AT TNAI-DRUG EXHIBITIONS IS NOW COMPULSORY FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN. BURMESE OFFICIALS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE MANY FOREIGN NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PLACE ON NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION WORK IN BURMA. HOWEVER, THE BURMESE BELIEVE THAT ELIMINATION OF TRAFFICKING IN BURMA IS ESSENTIALLY AN INTERNAL PROBLEM. THE GUB HAS ACCEPTED UN ASSISTANCE FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL AND, WITHOUT PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, U.S. MATERIAL ASSISTANCE. BEYOND THIS, THE GUB HAS SHOWN NO DESIRE TO ENGAGE IN BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION WORK.

J. COMMITMENT. BUDGET FIGURES DO NOT SEPARATE OUT NARCOTICS CONTROL COSTS. IT IS EVIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT AGREAT DEAL OF RESOURCES, ESPECIALLY MANPOWER, ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS THIS END, AND THAT NARCOTICS CONTROL REMAINS ONE OF THE GUB'S HIGHEST NATIONAL PRIORITIES. POPPY ERADICATION WORK WAS EXPANDED IN 1977; MUCH OF THE MANPOWER INVOLVED WAS MOBILIZED ON THE LOCAL LEVEL. MILITARY MANPOWER DEDICATED TO THIS WORK ALSO INCREASED. TROOPS WERE USED EXTENSIVELY TO DESTROY POPPIES, BLOCK CARAVAN ROUTES AND ATTACK REFINERIES. OFTEN, THESE WERE MULTI-BATTALION OPERATIONS. THE GUB DOES NOT PUBLISH LISH COMPREHENSIVE TATISTICS ON NARCOTICS SEIZURES OR ARRESTS, THUS COMPARISONS BASED ON THESE
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INCOMPLETE DATA WOULD NOT BE CONCLUSIVE. WE ESTIMATE 1977 SEIZURES TO DATE AS FOLLOWS: HEROIN - 260 KILOGRAMS; MORPHINE BASE - 85 KILOGRAMS; REFINED OPIUM/HEROIN SOLUTION - 650 GALLONS; RAW OPIUM - 1.7 TONS.

K. INSTITUTIINAL FRAMEWORK. THE BURMA ARMY CONTINUES TO BE THE PRINCIPAL EXECUTOR OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION WORK. THE BURMA ARMY'S COMMITMENT TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION WORK HAS INCREASED STEADILY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. POLICE AND OTHER CIVILIAN AGENCIES ARE ALSO INVOLVED SUBSTANTIALLY IN NARCOTICS CONTROL.

L. LEGAL FRAMEWORK. THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN

THE LEGISLATIVE OR ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK NOR DO WE ANTICIPATE ANY IN THE COMING YEAR. AS AN ADJUNCT OF INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, BURMA ARMY OFFICERS HAVE ASSUMED A GREATER ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS. GIVEN THE BURMA ARMY'S INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION, MILITARY OFFICERS IN CONTROL OF CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES MAY BE MORE INCLINED TO PURSUE AN ACTIVE ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM.

M. CONSTRAINTS. THE GUB IS ENGAGED IN BITTER AND LARGE-SCALE SKIRMISHING WITH A HOST OF INSURGENT GROUPS. IT IS, IN FACT, FIGHTING A TERRITORIAL WAR WITH THE BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY, AN ORGANIZATION WHICH EFFECTIVELY CONTROLS A GOOD PIECE OF THE NORTHERN SHAN STATE. COUNTERING THE BCP DRAWS MILITARY RESOURCES THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE USED TO CHASE CARAVANS OR ATTACK REFINERIES. THE INSURGENT SITUATION ALSO AFFECTS THE POPPY ERADICATION PROGRAM. MUCH OF CURRENT OPIUM PRODUCTION GOES ON IN AREAS UNDER INSURGENT CONTROL. BURMESE/THAI ANIMOSITY SEEMS TO PRECLUDE EFFECTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THESE TWO COUNTRIES AND THUS DENIES THE BURMESE ONE OPTION IN ITS EFFORTS TO DRIVE OUT PERMANENTLY THE TRAFFICKERS FROM THE BORDER AREA SANCTUARIES.

N. PARTICIPATING U.S. AGENCIES. THE BURMESE HAVE PROVEN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACT ON INFORMATION PINPOINTING NARCOTICS CACHES OR REFINERY SITES. THE GUB CONTINUES TO OPPOSE THE ASSIGNMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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A DEA OFFICER TO RANGOON BUR HAS RESPONDED TO INFORMATION OBTAINED BY DEA IN BANGKOK AND CHIANG MAI. IN FACT, IT WAS DEA INFORMATION WHICH LED TO THE RECORD NARCOTICS SEIZURE IN TACHILEK IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR. DEA SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO CONTINUE ITS INTELLIGENCE GATHERING ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND. AS TRAFFICKERS CHANGE THEIR TACTICS AND EMPLOY MORE SOPHISTICATED TECHNIQUES, THE CHALLENGES TO BURMESE EXPERTISE IN CERTAIN AREAS, CUSTOMS DETECTION FOR EXAMPLE, WILL BECOME GREATER. UNTIL AND UNLESS THE BURMESE REQUEST TRAINING AND OTHER ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, THE ROLE OF OTHER U.S. AGENCIES WILL REMAIN LIMITED.

O. OTHER DONORS. IN MAY 1976 BURMA AND THE UN SIGNED AN AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING AN UNFDAC PROGRAM FOR BURMA. THIS PROGRAM CALLED FOR AN EXPENDITURE OF 6.6 MILLION DOLLARS OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. UNFDAC HAS OR WILL ESTABLISH WORKING PROGRAMS IN THE FOLLOWING FIELDS: AGRICULTURE/CROP SUBSTITUTION; LAW ENFORCEMENT; DRUG TREATMENT; REHABILITATION; AND EDUCATION. NORWAY HAS CONTRIBUTED 5.4 MILLION DOLLARS TO THE UN SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR THE UNFDAC PROGRAM IN BURMA. NORWAY HAS URGED OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS TO CONTRIBUTE MONEY FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL IN BURMA BUT WITH NO SUCCESS AS YET.

P. FUTURE OUTLOOK. WE EXPECT THE GUB TO CONTINUE ITS CURRENT BROAD-FRONT NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION PROGRAM, INCLUDING POPPY ERADICATION, OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTICS CARAVANS, ATTACKS ON REFINERIES AND STORAGE SITES, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

DESIGNED TO DISRUPT THE MARKETING OF NARCOTICS IN BURMA. THE BURMA HAS BEEN REFINING ITS TECHNIQUES AND WE EXPECT THAT FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS WILL INFLICT COSTLY LOSSES ON THE TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS MANY OF THE EASIER GAINS HAVE BEEN MADE ALREADY, HOWEVER. THOUGH WE FORESEE NO LESSENING OF THE GUB COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ITS PROGRAM, IT WILL BE INCREASINLY DIFFICULT FOR THE BURMESE TO ACHIEVE DRAMATIC NEW SUCCESS. WITH
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THE COUNTRY'S LIMITED MARKETING AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS, CROP SUBSTITUTION WILL NOT EASILY TAKE HOLD. THE TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALREADY RESPONDED TO GUB NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS BY ADOPTING NEW TACTICS. THE GUB MAY FIND ITSELF CONFRONT-ING TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES OF AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT NATURE. THE NARCOTICS MARKET IS CURRENTLY DEPRESSED THROUGHOUT BURMA, BUT IT WILL TAKE INCREASINGLY LARGER AMOUNTS OF RESOURCES DEDICATED TO NARCOTICS CONTROL TO KEEP THE MARKET FROM TURNING AROUND. WE EXPECT THE BURMA ARMY TO CONTINUE MOUNTING OPERATIONS AGAINST THE TRAFFICKERS, BUT DESTRUCTION OF THE TRAFFICKING/ INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS IS NOT LIKELY SOON.

Q. RECOMMENDED WASHINGTON ACTION. THE U.S. NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORT IN BURMA IS TIED DIRECTLY TO THE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION PROGRAM OF THE GUB. WE BELIEVE THE SUCCESS OF THE BURMESE PROGRAM TO DATE DEMONSTRATES THE VALIDITY OF THIS APPROACH. WE CAN EXPECT THE BURMESE TO PUT FORWARD ADDITIONAL REQUESTS FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE. WHILE THE MISSION CAN EVALUATE THESE REQUESTS IN TERMS OF THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE ENTIRE BURMESE EFFORTS, THE MISSION CANNOT READILY JUDGE THE RELATIONSHIP OF SUCCESSES WITHIN BURMA TO U.S. OR WORLDWIDE NARCOTICS CONCERNS. AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, WE RECOMMEND THAT AT A MINIMUM WE SHOULD PROVIDE SPARE PARTS AND REPLACEMENTS FOR EQUIPMENT WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN SUPPLIED UNDER THE NCAP OR WHICH WILL BE DELIVERED IN FY-78. WE SHOULD ALSO SUPPORT ON A SELECTIVE BASIS BURMESE REQUESTS FOR FMS PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD ENHANCE THEIR MILITARY CAPABILITY AND THUS THEIR ABILITY TO MORE EFFECTIVELY SUPPRESS NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. ULTIMATELY, THE TEST OF OUR NARCOTICS CONTROL POLICY FOR BURMA WILL BE THE POSITION BURMA OCCUPIES AS EXPORTER OF NARCOTICS. WE LOOK TO THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO DEVELOP A METHODOLOGY WHICH CAN MORE ACCURATELY TRACE THE FLOW OF BURMESE OPIATES IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING NETWORKS.

3. PROJECT DATA SHEET -- NARCOTICS CONTROL

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A. PROJECT GOAL. TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF BURMA-PRODUCED OPIATES ENTERING THE ILLICIT INTERNATIONAL MARKET, UNTIL BURMA IS EVENTUALLY ELIMINATED AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF

ILLCIT DRUGS.

B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

(1) SUFFICIENT AIR SUPPORT CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE RESUPPLY AND RECONNAISSANCE FOR THE BURMESE ARMED FORCES AGGRESSIVELY TO ATTACK THE OPIUM PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND REFINING SYSTEMS AND THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING/INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS THAT RUN THEM. THE DEFINITION OF WHAT IS "SUFFICIENT" SHOULD BE LEFT FLEXIBLE, BASED ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND EXPERIENCE; THUS IT IS NOT REALISTICALLY POSSIBLE TO SPECIFY A DEFINITE TIME FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE.

(2) SUFFICIENT COMMAND/CONTROL CAPABILITY INCLUDING RADIO COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE BURMESE ARMED FORCES AGGRESSIVELY TO ATTACK THE OPIUM PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND REFINING SYSTEMS AND THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING/INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS THAT RUN THEM. THIS SHOULD BE ACHIEVED BY THE END OF FY-79 OR FY-80 AT THE LATEST, ALTHOUGH CONTINUED LONG-TERM SPARE PARTS SUPPORT WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY.

C. PROGRESS TO DATE. THE BURMESE DECISION IN 1974 TO LAUNCH A VIGOROUS NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CAMPAIGN AS A HIGH NATIONAL PRIORITY WAS MADE ESSENTIALLY IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS -- THEY RECOGNIZED THAT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING HAD BECOME A MAJOR SOURCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MOST OF THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS, AND THAT THEY HAD A SERIOUS DOMESTIC HEROIN ABUSE PROBLEM AMONG THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CITIES. HOWEVER, OUR PROVISION OF MATERIAL SUPPORT HAS BEEN A MAJOR CONFIDENTIAL

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FACTOR IN THEIR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT THAT DECISION WITH A CONSIDERABLE MEASURE OF SUCCESS.

ALTHOUGH THE FIGURES ARE NECESSARILY INEXACT, OUR INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT BURMA'S OPIUM PRODUCTION DROPPED FROM WELL OVER 400 TONS IN 1975, TO ABOUT 390 TONS IN 1976, TO ABOUT 200 TONS IN 1977. CARAVANS FROM MAJOR PRODUCTION AREAS TO REFINERY INSTALLATIONS ALONG THE THAI BORDER HAVE EXPERIENCED INCREASED DIFFICULTY IN GETTING THROUGH BECAUSE OF BURMESE INTERDICTION EFFORTS, SO THAT DELIVERIES OF OPIATES TO THE THAI BORDER HAVE BEEN REDUCED STEADILY FROM 1975 ONWARDS. THE BURMESE HAVE MOUNTED FOUR MAJOR, MULTI-BATTALION OPERATIONS AGAINST BORDER-AREA REFINERY COMPLEXES SINCE LATE 1975. FINALLY, POLICE OPERATIONS IN BOTH THAILAND AND BURMA HAVE CAUSED FURTHER DANGER AND FINANCIAL LOSSES TO THE TRAFFICKERS. ALL OF THESE DISRUPTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN A SEVERE DEPRESSION IN THE BURMESE WHOLESALE OPIATE MARKET, WITH PRICES AT OR NEAR RECORD LOWS AND MANY TRAFFICKERS UNABLE TO SELL THEIR STOCKS EVEN AT BARGAIN PRICES.

WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF PARAGRAPH B,
PROGRESS TO DATE IS AS FOLLOWS:

(1) AIRCRAFT. EIGHTEEN BELL 205-A HELICOPTERS WERE DELIVERED BETWEEN MID-1975 AND JANUARY 1977. THREE OF THEM HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN ACCIDENTS, LEAVING 15 CURRENTLY OPERATIONAL. ONE F-27 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT WAS DELIVERED IN JUNE 1976, AND IS IN USE. SPARE PARTS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED FOR ALL OF THESE AIRCRAFT ON A REGULAR BASIS.

(2) COMMUNICATIONS. THREE AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATIONS TRANSCEIVERS (FOR USE WITH THE U.S.- PROVIDED AIRCRAFT) AND 20 HIGH-FREQUENCY SSB TRANSCEIVERS (FOR COMMUNICATIONS AT THE COMPANY LEVEL AND ABOVE) WERE RECEIVED IN 1976; AND 20 FM5-A AND 80 FM1-A TACTICAL RADIOS (FOR COMMUNICATIONS BELOW THE COMPANY LEVEL) WERE RECEIVED IN 1977. ALL OF THESE RADIOS ARE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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USE.

D. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING FY-78. WE EXPECT BURMA'S OPIUM PRODUCTION TO BE HELD IN CHECK AND A CONTINUED DECLINE IN DELIVERIES OF OPIATES TO THE THAI BORDER IN FY-78 AND FY-79, BUT PROBABLY AT A CONSIDERABLY SLOWER RATE THAN IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

(1) AIRCRAFT, DURING FY-78 WE WILL PROVIDE THE BURMESE WITH FOUR FH-227 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, ONE BELL 205-A HELICOPTER (A REPLACEMENT FOR ONE OF THOSE DESTROYED), AND POSSIBLY SIX OR SEVEN BELL 206 LIGHT HELICOPTERS. ALSO, WE WILL SUPPLY SPARE PARTS FOR ALL OF THE AIRCRAFT PROVIDED UNDER THE NCAP. IN FY-79, WE ANTICIPATE GIVING THE BURMESE TWO BELL 205-A'S (REPLACING THE REST OF THOSE DESTROYED). WE SHOULD ALSO BUDGET FOR AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT, SINCE THERE MAY WELL BE FURTHER ACCIDENTS IN THE COMING YEAR. SPARE PARTS SUPPORT FOR ALL NCAP AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE CONTINUED.

(2) COMMUNICATIONS. DURING FY-78, WE EXPECT DELIVERY OF 50 SC-120 HIGH-FREQUENCY TRANSCEIVERS (COMPATIBLE WITH THE SC-130'S PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED), 40-50 RACAL HAND-HELD FM TRANSCEIVERS (FOR SMALL UNIT COMMUNICATIONS), A SMALL AGENT ALARM SYSTEM, AND SOME SPARE PARTS AND POSSIBLY SOME TEST EQUIPMENT. IN FY-79 WE HOPE TO PROVIDE A COMSHELL MOUNTAIN TOP REPEATER SYSTEM, PROBABLY SOME SPARE PARTS, AND POSSIBLY SOME ADDITIONAL RACAL HAND-HELD TRANSCEIVERS.

E. PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE PROJECT. THE PRIMARY DIFFICULTY INHIBITING EARLY ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOAL IS THE CONTINUED STRENGTH OF INSURGENT/TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS,
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WHICH PREVENTS EFFECTIVE BURMESE GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER SOME OF THE PRIMARY OPIUM PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING AREAS. THE BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY IS PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME IN THIS REGARD, SINCE IT IS THE STRONGEST OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE ONE WHICH POSES THE GREATEST LONG-TERM THREAT TO THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT. SHOULD THE REGIME'S POWER DETERIORATE IN THE COMING YEARS -- AN EVENTUALITY WE DO NOT FORECAST BUT CANNOT EXCLUDE AS A REAL POSSIBILITY-- THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO DEVOTE INCREASING ATTENTION TO SURVIVAL AND WOULD HAVE DECREASING ABILITY TO ATTACK THE INSURGENTS' TRAFFICKING OPERATIONS. ANOTHER POTENTIAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE BURMESE MAY USE THE EQUIPMENT WE HAVE PROVIDED FOR ACTIVITIES NOT AS STRICTLY RELATED TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AS A NARROW CONSTRUCTION OF THE 1974 U.S.-BURMA AGREEMENT ON NARCOTICS CONTROL MIGHT SEEM TO REQUIRE. HOWEVER, IT IS DEMONSTRABLE THAT THE GUB TAKES THE AGREEMENT SERIOUSLY, AND THE MISSION WILL CONTINUE ITS CLOSE MONITORING OF EQUIPMENT USAGE. FINALLY, A SIGNIFICANT CONSTRAINT ON RAPID PROGRESS TOWARD THE STATED GOAL IS THE LACK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BURMESE AND THAI IN ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS ALONG THEIR BORDER. THIS STEMS FROM A LONG HISTORY OF MUTUAL ANTI-PATHY AND DISTRUST, AND IS NOT LIKELY TO BE OVERCOME SOON.

F. COOPERATING COUNTRY CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT. MOST OF THE MANPOWER, BUDGET AND OTHER RESOURCES OF THE BURMESE ARMED FORCES IS DEVOTED TO FIGHTING THE TRAFFICKING/INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. UP TO FOUR BATTALIONS OF TROOPS, WITH SUBSTANTIAL AIR FORCE SUPPORT, HAVE BEEN USED IN OPERATIONS AGAINST REFINERY COMPLEXES. POLICE FORCES AND OTHER CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN INVOLVED IN SUCH OPERATIONS AS POPPY CROP DESTRUCTION AND DRUG SEIZURES. ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO QUANTIFY THIS CONTRIBUTION, THE COMMITMENT OF THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AS A HIGH NATIONAL PRIORITY IS BEYOND DOUBT. IT CORRECTLY VIEWS THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN AS BEING VERY MUCH IN BURMA'S SELF-INTEREST, BOTH BECAUSE OF THE SYMBIOTIC

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NARCOTICS AND INSURGENCY AND BECAUSE OF THE SERIOUS DOMESTIC DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM.

G. TRAINING. DURING FY-77, 18 BURMA AIR FORCE PILOTS AND TECHNICIANS WERE TRAINED IN THE U.S. IN OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE FH-227 AIRCRAFT BEING PROVIDED UNDER NCAP. IN FY-78, WE ANTICIPATE THAT TWO ARMY TECHNICIANS WILL BE TRAINED IN THE U.S. ON MAINTENANCE OF NCAP-PROVIDED RADIOS, AND IF BELL 206'S SHOULD BE PROVIDED WE CAN ALSO ANTICIPATE THAT 15-20 AIR FORCE PILOTS AND TECHNICIANS WILL BE TRAINED IN THE U.S. ON OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THESE HELICOPTERS.

H. OTHER DONORS. IN 1976 THE UN AND BURMA AGREED ON A DRUG ABUSE CONTROL PROGRAM UNDER WHICH UNFDAC IS CONTRIBUTING \$6.6 MILLION IN HARD CURRENCY DURING 1976-81, AND THE BURMESE ARE CONTRIBUTING AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT IN KYATS. ASSISTANCE IS BEING PROVIDED IN THE FIELDS OF CROP SUBSTITUTION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION ON DRUG ABUSE HAZARDS, AND TREATMENT/REHABILITATION OF ADDICTS. ALTHOUGH THE PROJECT GOT OFF TO A SLOW START, BY LATE 1977 IT WAS FULLY OPERATIONAL.

I. FY-79 PROGRAM. DURING FY-79, WE PLAN TO CONTINUE SUPPLYING SPARE PARTS FOR PREVIOUSLY-PROVIDED AIRCRAFT, REPLACE PREVIOUSLY-PROVIDED AIRCRAFT WHICH HAVE BEEN DESTROYED (AT LEAST TWO BELL 205-A'S), PROVIDE A COMSHELL MOUNTAINTOP REPEATER SYSTEM, AND POSSIBLY PROVIDE SOME ADDITIONAL HAND-HELD RACAL TRANSCEIVERS. SINCE WE DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COSTS OF THESE ITEMS, COST ESTIMATES WILL HAVE TO BE SUPPLIED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

J. FUNDING TABLES. THE ACCOUNTING FOR THIS PROJECT IS NOT DONE IN RANGOON, AND WE COULD ONLY MAKE GUESSES ABOUT THE FIGURES REQUESTED. THEREFORE, WE REQUEST THAT THESE DATA BE CONFIDENTIAL

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BE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

4. NEW PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

WE HAD EARLIER CONTEMPLATED INITIATING A NEW PROJECT IN FY-78, ON DOMESTIC DEMAND REDUCTION. HOWEVER, THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT REJECTION OF THE CONSULTANT WE HAD PROPOSED TO SURVEY BURMESE FACILITIES AND NEEDS LEADS US TO RECOMMEND THAT FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF A NEW PROJECT OF THIS SORT BE DEFERRED UNTIL WE HAVE SOME INDICATION THAT THE GUB WANTS OUR HELP IN THIS FIELD.
BEAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

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